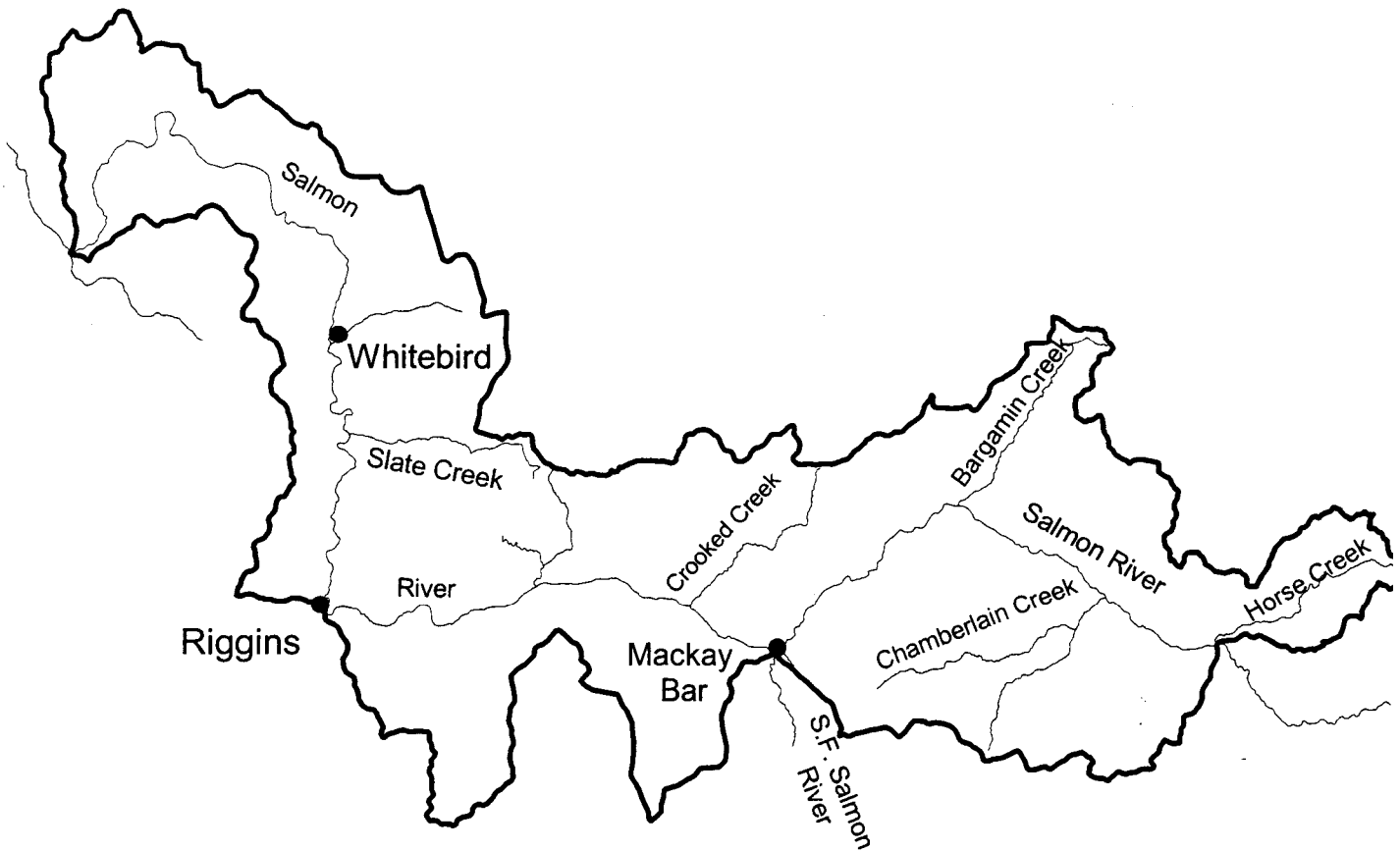


Salmon River Drainage

Mouth to Horse Creek



9 0 9 18 27 Miles

A horizontal scale bar with alternating black and white segments. The segments are labeled with the numbers 9, 0, 9, 18, and 27, representing distances in miles.

7. SALMON RIVER DRAINAGE - MOUTH TO HORSE CREEK

A. Overview

Horse Creek enters the Salmon River from the north side of the river 187 miles upstream from the confluence of the Salmon and Snake rivers. This reach of river is a migration corridor for spring and summer chinook, sockeye, and steelhead, as well as an overwintering area for adult steelhead and juvenile chinook and steelhead. It supports a myriad of recreational opportunities including rafting, jet boating and steelhead fishing. There is also fishing opportunity for rainbow trout, cutthroat trout, bull trout and smallmouth bass. Sturgeon are present in this reach of the river. Portions of the Salmon River between the mouth and Horse Creek are protected by wilderness and wild river status. The upper segment drains parts of the Frank Church River of No Return and Gospel Hump Wilderness areas.

The 53-mile section of river from the mouth to Hammer Creek is under consideration for classification in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. This reach of river has limited access and provides for a quality steelhead fishing opportunity. White water boating is increasing in popularity. The Central Idaho Wilderness Act of 1980 prohibits mining activity in this river stretch.

The section of river from Hammer Creek to Long Tom Bar is heavily accessed. Highway 95 parallels 30 miles of the river from Whitebird upstream to Riggins. The river from Riggins upstream to Long Tom Bar is bounded by a secondary road. Fall chinook salmon spawning was documented in this river section in 1993 and 1994.

There are 74 miles of unroaded river between Long Tom Bar and Horse Creek. This section of Salmon River is commonly referred to as the Salmon River canyon. This reach of river has limited access and is classified "wild" under the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. It supports an expanding use of jet boat traffic directed toward fall and spring steelhead fishing. Most of the commercial fishing outfitter services occur in this area.

Downstream from Long Tom Bar, naturally reproducing populations of chinook salmon exist primarily in Slate and Whitebird creeks. No chinook salmon have been stocked in the lower Salmon tributaries, except the Little Salmon. (The Little Salmon River is discussed separately.) Spring chinook production in Slate and Whitebird creeks results from wild fish and perhaps strays from the Rapid River program.

Many of the tributary streams in the Salmon River canyon are important producers of wild steelhead trout. These tributaries represent the largest and the only contiguous production area for wild A-run steelhead trout in the Salmon River. Resident fisheries in these tributaries are supported primarily by wild juvenile steelhead trout. Chamberlain Creek also supports wild chinook salmon production. Most of these tributaries have good to excellent habitat.

Anadromous management action in this river section will emphasize maintaining existing natural spawning populations of chinook salmon and steelhead trout and preserving good habitat quality. Tributaries in the Salmon River canyon will continue to be managed for wild chinook salmon and steelhead trout production. Maintenance of the genetic resources contained in the wild populations in this river section will be a top priority. The

mainstem Salmon River will continue to be managed for exploitation of hatchery steelhead trout but consumptive harvest is not expected on naturally produced steelhead trout or chinook salmon during the next five years. Wild adult steelhead trout will continue to provide opportunity for catch-and-release fishing.

There are no significant impoundments within the Salmon River drainage. The integrity of the drainage, including the diversity of fishing and recreational opportunity, is dependent on a free-flowing river. Legislation passed by Congress in 1989 prohibits the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission from issuing any licenses to develop new mainstem hydropower projects in the unprotected portions of the Salmon River. Congressional intent also includes federally authorized projects.

B. Objectives and Programs

1. Objective: Maintain maximum potential for fishery and recreational values in the Salmon River from mouth to Horse Creek.

Program: Work with land managers to ensure adequate riparian and water quality protection along the Salmon River corridor between Hammer and Vinegar creeks. Oppose land use activities that degrade quality of natural production and migration areas.

2. Objective: Maintain existing natural spawning populations of chinook salmon and steelhead trout.

Program: Allow natural production to sustain existing natural populations. Do not outplant hatchery steelhead trout and chinook salmon into the mainstem or tributaries, from French Creek upstream to the Middle Fork Salmon River, to preserve wild fish genetic resources. Limit hatchery outplanting in the rest of this section to support supplementation research and areas devoid of naturally produced anadromous fish.

3. Objective: Minimize harvest impacts to naturally produced chinook salmon and steelhead trout populations.

Program: Maintain fishing regulations implemented to avoid harvest impacts to juvenile steelhead trout populations.

4. Objective: Maintain and improve habitat quality of tributary production areas.

Program: Oppose land use activities that further degrade the quality of natural production areas. Encourage implementation of grazing management plans, which eliminate negative grazing impacts to fishery productivity and survival.

5. Objective: Increase fishing access.

Program: Develop small outboard and float boat launch facilities where possible.

6. Objective: Manage mountain lakes within productivity and user preference constraints of individual lakes.

Program: Continue mountain lakes investigations in cooperation with USFS to collect biological, physical and chemical characteristics of each lake. Use acquired information to develop management plans.

Drainage: SALMON RIVER - MOUTH TO HORSE CREEK					
Water	Miles/acre	Fishery			Management Direction
		Type	Species Present	Management	
From mouth to Little Salmon River, including tributaries (except Little Salmon River)	365/	Mixed/ Anadromous	Steelhead	Anadromous	Enhance steelhead fishing opportunity with smolt releases into Salmon River and selected tributaries. Maximize harvest of surplus hatchery steelhead in the Salmon River.
			Chinook salmon	Anadromous	Manage selected tributaries for natural production of spring chinook salmon. Provide salmon sport fishing and opportunity to harvest surplus hatchery chinook salmon in the Salmon River.
			Bull trout	Conservation	Closed to harvest.
			Cutthroat trout	Wild trout	Closed to harvest in mainstem, restrict harvest in tributaries.
			Rainbow trout Mountain whitefish Smallmouth bass	General	Stock the mainstem with hatchery rainbow trout of an appropriate stock. Evaluate growth, condition, and return to the creel.
			White sturgeon	Conservation	Maintain sturgeon fishery as nonconsumptive. Evaluate need for further fishing restrictions to reduce hooking mortality. Evaluate effects of Tribal harvest on population structure.
Slate Creek	60/	Coldwater/ Anadromous	Steelhead Chinook salmon	Anadromous	Closed to adult harvest Work with USFS to protect and improve habitat. Manage for natural production of steelhead and chinook salmon.
			Rainbow trout Cutthroat trout	Wild trout	Restrict trout harvest. Work with USFS to provide public fishing pond for hatchery trout.
			Bull trout	Conservation	Closed to harvest.
White Bird Creek		Coldwater/ Anadromous	Steelhead Chinook salmon	Anadromous	Closed to adult harvest. Work with USFS to protect and improve habitat.
			Rainbow trout	Wild trout	Restrict trout harvest.
Tolo Lake	/20	Warmwater	Largemouth bass Crappie	General	No motors water.
Grangeville Pond	/5	Coldwater	Brook trout	General	Develop public access to the pond.

From Little Salmon River to Horse Creek	366/	Mixed/ Anadromous	Chinook salmon Steelhead	Anadromous	Closed to non-hatchery adult harvest. Maximize production of wild chinook salmon. Improve angler access to the river. Work with land managers to protect critical steelhead spawning and rearing habitat in the Bargamin Creek watershed.
			Bull trout Cutthroat trout	Conservation	Closed to harvest. Evaluate population status of cutthroat trout.
			Rainbow trout	Wild trout	Maintain or improve present habitat quality. Develop regulations to enhance fishery in the long term.
			Mountain whitefish		
			Sturgeon	Conservation	Maintain sturgeon fishery as nonconsumptive.
Tributaries from Little Salmon River to Horse Creek		Coldwater/ Anadromous	Brook trout Smallmouth bass	General	
			Steelhead Chinook salmon	Conservation	Closed to adult harvest.
			Bull trout	Conservation	Closed to harvest.
			Cutthroat trout Rainbow trout	Wild trout	Restrict harvest of trout.
			Brook trout Mountain whitefish	General	
Alpine lakes	/500	Coldwater	Rainbow trout Cutthroat trout Brook trout Arctic grayling Golden trout Rainbow trout x cutthroat trout hybrids	General	Develop management strategies for each lake based on management objectives, productivity and user preferences.
			Bulltrout	Conservation	Closed to harvest.